



# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

*Providing leadership for the fire and emergency services since 1873*

4025 FAIR RIDGE DRIVE • FAIRFAX, VA 22033-2868 • TEL: 703/273-0911 • FAX: 703/273-9363 • www.iafc.org

May 17, 2017

The Honorable Michael Burgess  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Burgess and Ranking Member Green:

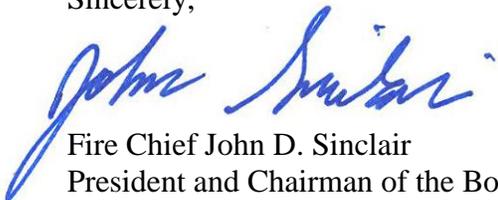
On behalf of the 12,000 members of the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), I thank you for holding today's hearing on "Examining Initiatives to Advance Public Health." Specifically, the nation's fire and emergency service leadership is grateful for your focus on H.R. 931, the Firefighter Cancer Registry Act of 2017. This legislation will create an important resource for researchers looking to understand and prevent the growing occurrence of cancer among our nation's firefighters. As a consistent supporter of this legislation, the IAFC urges the subcommittee to mark-up this legislation.

While there is still a need to do more comprehensive research about the relationship between cancer and our nation's fire and emergency service, there is an overall higher risk for cancer among firefighters than the general public. Research has shown that there are significant increases in the risks of cancers in the colon, prostate, intestine, lung, bladder, kidney and other organs in firefighters. For some types of cancer, the risk relative to the general population can be 229% higher. However, more research needs to be done to identify what causes such increased risk of cancers and how to prevent them.

H.R. 931 would create an excellent opportunity for cancer researchers and the fire and emergency service community by creating a voluntary national registry for firefighters that could then be linked to state cancer registries. The data in the registry would include important information about the firefighter's medical history; demographic information; number of incident responses and years in service; whether the firefighter was career or volunteer; what other jobs the firefighter might have had; and other risk factors. In addition, the registry is directed to include under-represented types of firefighters such as women, minorities and volunteers. Most importantly, researchers that use the data from this registry would have to make their research and results available to the fire and emergency service, so that these findings can be included into updated firefighting procedures, tactics, and personal protective equipment. It is our hope that future researchers will be able to reduce the occurrence of cancer in our nation's fire and emergency service.

The IAFC thanks you for focusing on this important legislation in today's hearing. Cancer is a daily concern for many of the nation's active and retired firefighters, and it must be addressed. We think that this legislation will help researchers identify the causes of cancers for firefighters and help us take steps to prevent it. We look forward to working with you to pass this legislation this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John D. Sinclair". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Fire Chief John D. Sinclair  
President and Chairman of the Board

C: The Honorable Chris Collins  
The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.

: kpl